

**Maj. Gen. Torrence Saxe**

*Commissioner & Adjutant General*

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**Alaska National Guard**

*Department of Military  
and Veterans Affairs*

Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska

**STATE OF ALASKA**

**PRESS RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

020-050

**May 27, 2020**

By Sgt. Seth LaCount

*Joint Force Headquarters Public Affairs*

### **Refilling the life supply**

Alaska National Guard and Blood Bank of Alaska hold blood drive at AKNG armory

**JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON, Alaska** —More than 30 Alaska National Guard Soldiers and Airmen, Alaska State Defense Force Soldiers, and other DMVA personnel volunteered to give blood at the National Guard Armory here yesterday in coordination with the Blood Bank of Alaska.

The blood drive was led by Lt. Col. Joseph Gerace, the 49th Brigade, Medical Detachment Commander of the ASDF, under the direction of the adjutant general of Alaska Maj. Gen Torrence Saxe.

Gerace has been on state active duty orders since March and has worked as part of the medical section for Joint Task Force-Alaska in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Although this state is one of the least affected by the virus overall, I think we've been highly prepared and dialed in to respond to whatever comes our way," Gerace said. "Drives like this are part of that."

Donors were met on the open drill hall floor of the armory by workers from the Blood Bank, before signing various medical questionnaires and taking their seats to donate.

"I'm impressed by everyone's willingness to give back to their community during such a critical time of need," said Gerace. "I expected that the Tuesday after Memorial Day would be a tough day to get volunteers. But all these folks stepped up, and we met our goal."

Donating blood products is essential to community health and the need for blood, plasma, and platelets is constant as part of our nation's critical infrastructure, according to the American Red Cross. Blood drives like this can maintain and secure adequate supplies for blood transfusions for patients throughout Alaska.

After each volunteer finished donating, Gerace gave them each a box of Girl Scout Cookies from the Girl Scouts of Alaska as a small token of appreciation. And the sweet choices were plentiful. As part of an individual effort to relieve some of the financial strain on the local economy and support the Girl Scouts, Gerace spent his entire stimulus check on Girl Scout cookies, and said he was happy to share the treats with the men and women who he's proud to serve alongside.

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## PHOTOS

1. **Attached pdf** includes story and a small selection of low-resolution photos for viewing on screen.
2. **DVIDS link** includes story and selected full-resolution photos. (Primarily for media, DVIDS is accessible from .mil computers.) [www.dvidshub.net/news/370862/refilling-life-supply-alaska-national-guard-and-blood-bank-alaska-hold-blood-drive-akng-armory](http://www.dvidshub.net/news/370862/refilling-life-supply-alaska-national-guard-and-blood-bank-alaska-hold-blood-drive-akng-armory)



Alaska Department of Military and Veterans Affairs personnel, including National Guardsmen, members of the State Defense Force, and state employees, donate blood to the Blood Bank of Alaska at a mobile center set up in the Guard armory on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, May 26, 2020. Blood donation centers have been impacted by a lack of donors during the COVID-19 pandemic, while the need for blood, plasma and platelets continue to be critically needed for many medical services. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Seth LaCount/Released)



Alaska Army National Guard Capt. James Tollefson, an operations plans officer with Joint Task Force-Alaska, donates blood at the Guard Armory on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, May 26, 2020. Blood donation centers have been impacted by a lack of donors during the COVID-19 pandemic, while the need for blood, plasma and platelets continue to be critically needed for many medical services. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Seth LaCount/Released)



Alaska Department of Military and Veterans Affairs personnel, including National Guardsmen, members of the State Defense Force, and state employees, donate blood to the Blood Bank of Alaska at a mobile center set up in the Guard armory on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, May 26, 2020. Blood donation is essential for hospitals to be able to take care of those who need it. The demand for blood products (blood, platelets and plasma) is constant, even when the world isn't in the midst of a global pandemic. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Seth LaCount/Released)